

Summary of Dunedin stakeholder meeting on Aurora's CPP – 6 August 2020

Purpose

This document provides a summary of the key high-level points raised at the Commission's meeting with community representatives and business owners in Dunedin in response to the release of the Commission's Aurora CPP Issues Paper consultation package. Please note:

- It is intended to provide a summary of who attended and topics of discussion and does not provide a record of the discussion verbatim.
- Not all views summarised below were universally held by all present at the meeting.

Time, Venue and Date

12pm – 2pm, 6 August 2020, The Dunedin Centre

Attendees

Stakeholders

- Shane Jenkins (University of Otago)
- Sophie Barker (Dunedin City Council)
- Mike Lord (Dunedin City Council)
- Steve Walker (Dunedin City Council)
- Simon Davies (Federated Farmers)
- Paul Pugh (Southern DHB)
- Tim Mepham (Representing self)
- Christine Garey (Deputy Mayor, Dunedin City Council)

The Commission

- John Crawford (Associate Commissioner)
- Nick Russ (General Manager, Regulation)
- Andy Burgess (Head of Energy, Airports, and Dairy)
- Rachael Coyle (Manager, Strategy and Information)
- Diana Price (Communications and External Relations Manager)

Key points raised by stakeholders

1. Some stakeholders expressed a level of distrust and dissatisfaction with Aurora concerning whether they would do what they said they would do in terms of fixing the network. Stakeholders noted that it was likely that this feeling was much stronger in Central Otago.
2. Some stakeholders provided advice on issues the Commission should expect to discuss with the Central Otago community to help ensure clarity. Amongst these was that:
 - 2.1 The Commission should explain the basis of regional pricing differences and differentiate between its role and that of the Electricity Authority.
 - 2.2 The Commission should explain that it did not have a role in regulating Aurora's shareholder. It should however explain how Aurora itself could be held accountable for delivery of its plan, including frequent public reporting.
 - 2.3 The Commission should explain the positive outcomes of the plan in enabling a safe reliable network for the long-term.
3. Stakeholders were interested in the extent to which the Commission could look into the structure of Aurora and its ownership. The Commission explained that its regulation is limited to just Aurora.
4. Some stakeholders were concerned that Aurora would continue to breach its quality standards under the CPP. The Commission explained that it had the power to set different quality standards for Aurora if justified.
5. Some stakeholders queried what the difference between a 3 year CPP and a 5 year CPP would mean, and said that Aurora had not made this clear to them when they consulted on their 3 year plan. The Commission explained the pros and cons of a longer versus a shorter regulatory period.
6. Some stakeholders were concerned there was a disconnect between retailers and Aurora which meant there was confusion about communication over outages.
7. Stakeholders generally acknowledged there was a distrust of the Aurora Board despite recent changes and that the current Board needed to earn the trust of the community and be held accountable.
8. Some stakeholders were not as concerned about reliability and noted that they hadn't encountered the issues of others despite being a rural customer.
9. Some stakeholders wanted more promotion of switching between retailers to ensure customers got the best deals they could to help soften any price increases.

10. Stakeholders were generally concerned about the impact of price increases on their community given the high levels of energy poverty in one of the coldest regions of the country.